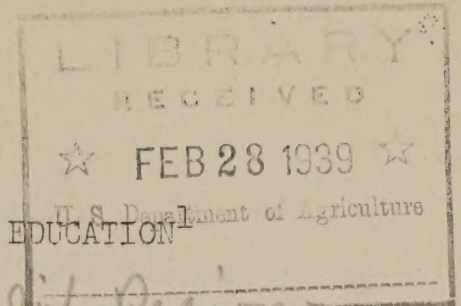


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THE CHILD IN THE MIGRATORY CAMP ---- EDUCATION

By Edward J. Rowell²

1 "This article is based on field researches done in 1935 for the Farm Security Administration, and the observations reflect on the education of the children of migratory workers in California in general rather than on the occupants of the Farm Security Administration camps for migratory agricultural workers. It is proposed to treat the subject of "THE CHILD IN THE MIGRATORY CAMP" in a series of several articles, the first two to be devoted to the subject of education and health of the migratory child and the later article or articles to child activities in the Farm Security Administration camps for migratory agricultural workers.

2 "Dr. Rowell is the regional labor relations advisor for the Farm Security Administration and is in charge of operations of the camps for migratory agricultural workers erected by that administration.

"Data on the child of the migratory worker are scattered and generally of such minute proportions that tendency to ignore the social implications of inadequacy of provision for their proper education and training as a mass phenomenon is easily understood. As a prelude to the exhibition of another minutia of statistical evidence, it is desired first to give an impression as to the actual number of children involved. As a starting point it will be recalled that in 1927 a survey of the State Department of Education reported 37,000 migratory children enrolled in the schools of the state. An interpolation based on the population census of school attendance in rural areas indicates that this number would have increased normally to around 42,000 by 1930. Since 1930, the outstanding characteristic of the rural labor market has been the influx of refugees from the great plains area and particularly from Oklahoma and Texas. This movement has been subject to measurement since the summer of 1935 through the facilities of the Bureau of Plant Quarantine, State Department of Agriculture. The total measured immigration of out-of-state migrants 'in need of manual employment' and members of their families has exceeded a quarter of a million individuals. The great bulk of these families have gone into agriculture as a means of livelihood and it seems not unreasonable to assume that the immigrations have added between 50,000 and 75,000 children of school age to our migrant rural population. A conservative estimate places the number of migrant children of school age at not less than 100,000. It is toward an understanding of the problems of these 100,000 that the limited data at hand and available elsewhere must be used.

"Data taken on 407 migrant families and single persons by the Farm Security Administration is not comprehensive enough to draw absolute conclusion as to the retardation of education among migrant children and the absence of education among migrant adults. Stated differently, this data is strongly corroborative of a condition that is felt to exist but may fall short of measuring the exact degree. However, the pattern of existence of migratory agricultural workers is sufficiently uniform so that even on this latter point it is probable that the results do not differ much from those possible of attainment through a wider sample.

"In the survey in question, 250 white families were interviewed and 157 Mexican. The term Mexican is used to include all persons of Mexican extraction regardless of where born and is merely a convenient term for distinguishing between the two dominant working groups in California agriculture.

"Of the white families, 60 per cent came to California between 1929 and 1935, the year the survey was made, although some had come to the state as early as 1885. Twenty-eight states were reported as states of origin, but over 50 per cent came from Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. This is, of course, significant in interpreting the data at hand, since the educational standards vary considerably in the several states. More important is the fact that so many of them have come from states with low educational standards. This must inevitably draw downward the average educational attainment of the group as a whole.

"The Mexican group is similarly handicapped, since only 17 or 10.8 per cent were native Americans.

"These data apply, however, only to the heads of families. As far as the children are concerned, for both Mexicans and whites the degree of uniformity will depend on the date of arrival in the state. Most of the Mexican groups (105) came to California prior to 1930 and 93 came before 1924 (47 did not report date of first arrival). As noted, the majority of the white families came in 1930 or after.

"In regard to the adult group there were 1173 persons over 14 years of age. Of these only 16 per cent had attained any grade above the eighth, and an additional 25 per cent completed the eighth grade; the other 59 per cent dropped out in the preceding seven years. As one commentator has remarked, 'Education is not merely a means of acquiring literacy and culture; it may be a stopping stone to social and economic advancement.' In these terms it is apparent that one channel of opportunity largely has been closed to the migrants now preparing and harvesting the crops of California agriculture.

"While the problem of adult education is important, it is far more so that the children of the migrant workers shall not be denied this opportunity for economic advancement. That California is not unmindful of the need is shown by an enactment of 1927 which, under the general laws of the state, provided for the maintenance of schools for the children of migratory laborers. Responsibility for administration of the Act was placed upon the superintendent of public instruction and upon the different county school superintendents. A revolving fund of \$10,000 was created for performance of the work.

"Accordingly, most counties that feel the effects of agricultural labor migrations have made special provision for the education of the migrant children. Ordinarily special facilities are used for school housing such as the school auditorium, extra class rooms, tents, etc.

"The general tendency toward segregation of migrant students is due to the fact that their attendance habits are irregular. Irregular in two ways: in the matter of time of enrollment and withdrawal and in daily attendance. Both these irregularities are reflected in Table 1. These figures on average daily attendance and total enrollment of eleven schools in Santa Clara County during the 1934-35 school year reflect the movement of migrants. In the vicinity of the Lagunas and Air Point Schools, spring peas are harvested in March, April and May. Because of the light regular attendance, the influx of migrants in these two instances trebled and quadrupled the total enrollment during these months. It was noticeable that during March and April the average daily attendance dropped relative to the increase in enrollment, which would indicate an irregularity in attendance. The fact that the upswing in attendance came in the middle of the spring semester reveals a tendency toward interruption of normal schooling.

"The Encinal and McKinley schools showed a decline throughout the year, but this was not due to agricultural labor factors. Similarly, the Alum Rock School showed an increasing enrollment that measured the expansion of a new real estate development rather than a movement of migratory families. The Campbell School enrollment and average daily attendance declined sharply in March, April and May because of an epidemic of measles.

"In contrast to the Lagunas and Air Point schools, Alviso and San Martin are at sites of labor influxes during the fall. The Bayside Cannery draws a number of migrant children to the Alviso School and a late fall grape harvest to San Martin. Again, in contrast to Lagunas and Air Point, the migrants represent a much smaller proportion of the total enrollment at these two schools, especially San Martin. In the case of this school there was no clear break in attendance during either the fall or spring semesters, the decline being a gradual one from

October to May. If there was irregularity in attendance on the part of migrant children in this school, it was concealed by the greater weight of attendance on the part of the regular students. At the Alviso School the interrupted semester for the migrants was quite clearly marked, since the enrollment dropped from 176 in October to 146 in November, a decline of 17 per cent. The greater proportion of migrants here also makes irregularity of attendance more susceptible of measurement. In September the average daily attendance was 91.8 percent of the total enrollment, in October only 86.1 per cent. For the remaining months of the year it averaged 95.4 per cent, the lowest being 93.2 per cent in February. These figures tend to substantiate the conclusion that school attendance by migrant children is irregular as well as interrupted by migration.

"The Jackson, Mountain View and Sunnyvale attendance records reflect a movement the opposite of that in Lagunas, Air Point, Alviso and San Martin. These sites are places of established residence for a number of non-white migratory workers who tend to leave the vicinity following the first November frost which closes the tomato season. Two important employments that they receive away from home are in the Monterey fish canneries in the winter and work during the asparagus pack at Suisun, Isleton and Stockton starting in March. Although they shuttle back and forth, most of them have returned by June and remain in residence working in fruit and berries until November. These remarks have reference to the Mountain View and Sunnyvale resident agricultural laborers rather than those of the Jackson Porto Rican colony, who follow a different pattern of migration. In these cases again, the broken semester was clearly shown, although the proportional relationship between average daily attendance and total enrollment showed no clear evidence of irregularity in attendance. As in the case of the San Martin School, the large number of regular students tends to conceal possible irregularities in attendance among the migrants. The fact of established residence is an additional deterrent to the truancy of any kind.

"The result to be expected from interrupted education and irregular attendance is retardation. To return to the data independently gathered in the field by the Farm Security Administration, the age-grade correlation of migrant children covered by the survey is corroborative of this expected result. Roughly speaking, a child should normally advance one grade each year, and, assuming entrance to grade school at six, a child should have finished the first grade at seven, the second at age eight, and so on. Table 2 shows that 13, or 4 per cent, of the children of white migrant families were retarded one grade at age eleven. The modal tendency was for this one year retardation to continue through the eighth grade. However, from age nine on, an increasing number failed to keep pace with the normal advancement. Thus 27.2 per cent were retarded one grade at age nine, 40.9 per cent, one or more grades at age ten; 66 per cent, one or more grades at age eleven; 69.2 per cent at age 12; 63.1 per cent at age 13; and 84 per cent at age 14. In the case of the Mexican children included in this

survey, the retardation was even greater. The modal group shifted from normal advancement to one year retardation at age ten and continued one year behind through age 14. Retardation started as early as the second grade in contrast to the whites, who showed no signs of this until the third grade. The proportionate number of Mexican children back one or more grades in schooling at ages from eight to fourteen were as follows: age 8, 36 per cent; age 9, 50 per cent; age 10, 70.8 per cent; age 11, 72.2 per cent; age 12, 75 per cent; age 13, 77.2 per cent, and age 14, 88.4 per cent.

"In explanation of the apparent backwardness of the Mexican children, it is probable that on the whole their parents evinced much less interest in the matter of education. In general the white families were extremely apprehensive lest their children suffer from the same limitations of education that hampered them. The interesting thing in this matter of retardation is that it apparently begins at about the age when the children are able to work in the fields or in the sheds. That it is no greater is probably due to the fact that there is a reluctance on the part of school authorities to delay advancement any more than absolutely necessary, in order to keep the migrant child from being too far out of line with other children of his age.

"It is evident that migratory life takes its toll in terms of restricted educational opportunities for the migrant children. From the above analysis it is clear that any backwardness exhibited arises in part from interruptions in the normal school year due to the necessity for leaving the community in order that the parents may find work. A second cause of backwardness seems to lie in the fact that attendance is irregular even during the periods of enrollment. Available employment for minors in certain crops and operations is contributory to such irregularity. Although the parents as a whole do not desire this, economic necessity is impelling. One father remarked that he took his family to Arizona to pick cotton because they all could work there; 'Same school law, but not so strict.' Truancy is not checked as carefully in the case of resident pupils. An objection to the Farm Security Administration camps for migrant agricultural workers was voiced on the grounds that they would increase the problem of housing school children because 'the truant officer would be able to find them'.

"Only part of the story is told in terms of educational retardation. Social retardation is also involved. Segregation of migrant students is done in order not to interrupt the routine of regular classes. The desire to avoid disruption of classes is accompanied by fear on the part of some that there is danger of disease because of the contacts the traveling children have had and the unsanitary conditions in which they live. Segregation, coupled with the greater age and poorer dress of the migrant children, raises a social barrier that removes the children and their parents one step further from the contacts of normal community life. As one migrant expressed it: 'They said of my child on the school ground, "He's from the county camp." Don't you see how it hurts? Makes it hard. Pretty soon the children begin to think they're not equal. That's a draw-back to this education'".

TABLE 1. AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE AND TOTAL ENROLLMENT IN
11 SANTA CLARA COUNTY SCHOOLS FOR 9 MONTHS, 1934-35

SCHOOL	ENROLL. and ATTEND.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY
Lagunas	ADA* TE*	6.85 7	5.82 6	5.42 6	4.87 6	6 6	6.55 9	11.7 14	14.03 18	17.18 18
Remarks:		Spring peas, March, April and May								
Air Point	ADA* TE*	28.1 30	27.10 29	26.71 30	21.60 25	23.85 25	24.68 27	51.25 99	88.50 126	63.90 NA**
Remarks:		Spring peas, March, April and May								
Encinal	ADA* TE*	69.46 75	68.55 73	67.95 72	69.04 71	66.38 72	65.63 71	64.49 68	57.98 62	58.24 59
Remarks:		Partially reflects permanent emigration of Japanese berry cultivators.								
McKinley	ADA* TE*	89.85 104	93.94 102	92.07 102	91.38 93	83.99 94	81.49 89	82.81 90	81.08 87	78.70 87
Remarks:		Change not connected with migratory labor								
Alviso	ADA* TE*	168.09 183	151.64 176	143.07 146	143.66 148	135.87 142	136.19 146	137.02 146	137.17 146	133.21 138
Remarks:		Bayside Cannery open in fall.								
San Martin	ADA* TE*	179.51 198	193.76 205	187.44 202	184.10 198	185.89 197	180.67 195	180.98 192	177.43 187	167.43 185
Remarks:		Grape harvest in fall.								
Alum Rock	ADA* TE*	253.30 266	261.23 276	267.39 282	258.95 275	271.75 295	279.44 295	282.85 297	284 299	NA.** NA.**
Remarks:		High grade real estate development.								
Campbell	ADA* TE*	351.10 381	348.31 371	347.82 367	352.08 368	352.42 372	328.46 381	308.51 344	305.48 335	299.27 319
Remarks:		Measle epidemic March, April and May.								
Jackson	ADA* TE*	106.10 112	114 124	118.36 127	121.36 131	125.60 131	123.46 137	136.10 149	136.98 149	144.14 150
Remarks:		Porto Rican colony established residences of migrants.								
Mountain View	ADA* TE*	958 988	945.80 985	932.22 969	903.62 949	885.25 952	856.74 944	867.35 942	861.21 927	879.66 910
Remarks:		Emigrate.								
Sunnyvale	ADA* TE*	699.10 750	698.17 743	693.39 730	696.89 723	699.66 745	672.87 714	653.53 706	632.80 700	641.4 686
Remarks:		Emigrate.								

* ADA Average Daily Attendance

** Not Available.

IN THE COURT OF THE COMMONS

IN THE COURT OF THE COMMONS

AGE-GRADE CORRELATION OF 353 CHILDREN 6-14 YEARS OF AGE
IN FAMILIES OF MIGRATORY WORKERS SEEKING AGRICULTURAL
EMPLOYMENT

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THE CHILD IN THE MIGRATORY CAMP -- HEALTH

By Edward J. Rowell

"In our last article, touching on the education of the migratory child, it was estimated that there were probably some hundred thousand children of school age or younger attached to the families of the migratory workers who roam about the state harvesting and performing other functions in connection with the handling of California crops. Limited statistical evidence was offered showing the restrictions on opportunities for education in this group. This article, on the health of the migratory child, is similarly limited in that there is not available a great deal of tangible statistical evidence.

"In order to give concreteness to our remarks, a preliminary tabulation has been made of the health reports submitted from the Farm Security Administration camp at Shafter. This camp was opened in the late fall of 1937 and, between January 1st and June 30, 1938, had an average total population of 952 individuals per week. Of these, a weekly average of 372 were children fifteen years of age and under. There was available through the cooperation of the State Department of Public Health a chance to have these families examined on their entrance into the camp and also to measure the incidence of illnesses and diseases afflicting the camp population.

"These data show that the incidence of disease in a group of extremely low income status, which lives under housing conditions rather deplorable on the whole, and which is sadly lacking in knowledge of proper dietary standards as well as the opportunity to exercise such knowledge if it were available, is not as excessive as might be surmised. Among the group as a whole, an average of fifteen illnesses a week were reported for the average camp population of 952. Among the younger group, the average number of weekly illnesses was eight as compared with the average number of 372 youths.

"The types of illnesses covered a considerable range, but those in which the frequency was greatest may be regarded as illnesses typical of this group rather than illnesses which one would encounter in a normal cross section of the population. Various skin diseases, such as eczemas and impetigo, were extremely frequent; and illnesses due to woefully inadequate diets and to primitive types of sanitation, such as diarrhea, dysentery, typhoid, and pneumonia, were also rather common. Among the children those ailments known as children's diseases, and which are commonly found in all strata of society, were most prevalent. Outstanding among these were measles, mumps, and whooping cough.

"In reporting on health conditions among the campers, the data is not broken down according to the age of the ailing persons. However, in arriving at the average figure for the group under 15 years of age measles, whooping cough, chicken pox, and mumps were all ascribed to this youth group and no other diseases were included. The frequency of conjunctivitis was extremely high, and it is probable that no grave injustice would have been done had this ailment also been ascribed to the children's group. However, the total number of children's diseases noted during the six months' period were as follows: measles - 164; whooping cough - 18; chicken pox - 18; mumps - 3. The numerical importance of measles may be ascribed to what amounted to a mild epidemic that ran from the latter part of March through April. The number of new cases of this disease in the week ending March 26 was 20 and in the consecutively ensuing weeks 20, 35, 25, 29 and 10, respectively. Subsequently it dwindled to an occasional case.

"While on the whole the number afflicted by the various diseases and ailments is not alarming, the fact that the amount of care and attention available is extremely limited is a cause for concern. It should be remembered that the ailments reported occurred in a camp where the sanitary standards were of the highest type, where the source of water was pure and potable, and where adequate provision was made for the disposal of sewage. The extent to which contagious diseases might run under unregulated circumstances is easily imaginable. Outbreaks of smallpox, typhoid and other dangerous communicable diseases in migratory workers' camps are frequently noted in the press. These outbreaks carry in their wake a potential menace to nearby resident communities and the recurrent risk of dangerous contagion and infection being widely spread as the workers travel about.

"Let us examine for a moment the actual set-up in a standard Farm Security Administration camp. The basic intention, of course, is to provide a sanitary and healthful place to live. The family, when it moves into the camp, is assigned to a space of ample size to prevent congestion and on which there has been erected a tent platform which takes the family off the bare ground. Tent lots are grouped about a utility building or bath house which provides flush toilets, hot and cold showers, and laundry tubs with hot and cold water at either end. With such facilities there is no need or excuse for any family to maintain anything but the highest standards of personal cleanliness.

"In addition the camp has a small clinical building. In periodic attendance at this building is a public health nurse who makes a brief inspection of the families at the time they enter camp or shortly thereafter in order to ascertain whether any members are afflicted with communicable diseases. When such is found to be the case, the families are required to locate their tents in an isolation unit that has been set aside from the other tent lots. The nurse is also available for examination of individuals that become sick after

their entrance into the camp. It should be noted that the public health nurse is not a member of the camp staff nor is she constantly in attendance. Her function is to extend to all migrant families within her territory the services of the State Department of Public Health. However, it is inevitably the case that the coverage among the migrants resident in camp is much greater than for those scattered about the community in ranch camps or in squatters' camps. A total of 1112 home calls were made on camp families by the nurse in the six months' period considered for the Shafter camp. More directly affecting the migratory children were the periodic health inspections made in the camp play area. Twenty-three of these were made in the period under discussion and resulted in 785 individual examinations. In addition, prenatal care and instruction were given to 73 pregnant mothers, and seven well baby clinics were held with a gross attendance of 270 and a maximum attendance of 67 at any one clinic.

"It should be noted that the Department of Public Health is primarily concerned with the prevention of disease rather than with its care and treatment. Along this line 1882 individuals were given typhoid shots, 113 immunized against diphtheria and 819 for smallpox. As a result of this emphasis on prevention there was, until the current year, a considerable gap between the need for medical services among the migrant families and the facilities at their disposal. The Farm Security Administration has made a step toward bridging this gap through the incorporation of the Agricultural Workers' Health and Medical Association.

"The Farm Security Administration was by no means the sole agency responsible for the development of the Association, for it represented the combined cooperative efforts of the California Medical Association, the State Board of Health, and the State Relief Administration.

"The Association, somewhat incorrectly described as a medical cooperative is a non-profit body controlled by a board of directors composed of representatives of the above groups. Its headquarters are at Fresno, and its services are available through district offices open in Fresno, Merced, San Joaquin, Tulare, Madera, Yuba, Yolo, Imperial and Santa Clara counties. It is to these district offices that migrant agricultural workers and members of their families may go when medical treatment is necessary and is not otherwise available.

"Eligibility for care and treatment under the auspices of the Association is limited to agricultural workers or low income resident farmers unable to provide for their own medical treatment or hospitalization. The procedure followed is briefly as follows: The applicant visits the district office, which is under the supervision of a medical social worker, and analysis is made of his need and eligibility. Then he is issued a certificate of membership in the Association which serves as an identification card. In accordance with the type of treatment or

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service that he will need, he is handed a list of physicians who have agreed to act as a panel for the Association. His choice as to physicians is free within the limits of the panel. The physician then treats the patient and bills the Association. Arrangements have been made with hospitals and drug stores in the various communities and, if hospitalization is necessary or if prescriptions must be filled, the physician makes the referral and the hospital or drug store, after fulfilling the recommended services, also bill the Association. As a result of cooperation on the part of the California Medical Association and the County Medical Associations involved, the Association has had from the beginning several hundred physicians and numerous hospitals and drug stores at its service. To date no final plan for dental services such as extractions and emergency treatments has been established, but progress is being made in this direction.

"It should be noted that in performing its functions the employees of the Association interpret the field of their activities somewhat liberally. For instance, one of the first cases coming before the Association was that of a young woman whose infant child was ill. The consulted pediatrician's prescription was dietary rather than medical. His order for fresh milk, orange juice and strained vegetables was treated, however, as a medical prescription and arrangements were made promptly with a grocery store to obtain the necessary foods. It is perhaps unnecessary to remark that the young mother was unable herself to provide the dietary deficiencies prescribed.

"Another instance of the somewhat broad interpretation of the medical social workers arose in the case of a man whose eyesight had begun to fail. Failing eyesight would lead inevitably to a progressive decline in economic status. Rather than wait until the man became a public charge through declining earning power, the necessary medical attention was given at once.

"The Medical Association began its activities on the first of May in Fresno County. Gradually extending its offices as conditions seemed to warrant and as rapidly as was administratively feasible, it has grown in its scope to the size indicated above. In May the total number of cases handled amounted to 807 and in June to 1337. Because of their earlier start, the greatest case loads have been carried in Fresno, San Joaquin and Tulare Counties.

"Between the preventive program of the State Department of Public Health, the standards of sanitation set in the Farm Security Administration camps, and the opportunities for care and treatment of diseases offered the migratory worker by the Agricultural Workers' Health and Medical Association, progress is being made toward the solution of the health problems of the migratory worker. Implicitly this includes the children. However, none of these efforts bears on the problem of the cumulative effects of undernourishment and improper diet due to consistently low incomes. These conditions, only partially reflected by the frequency of ailments fostered by malnutrition, also take their toll in terms of general physical debility and mental lethargy. As normal environmental factors for a substantial group in our future citizenry, they represent a real basis for concern on the part of all."

